

FIELD NOTES

NOTES FROM SOUTH ALABAMA

During the four months which I spent near Silver Hill, in South Alabama, I devoted my free time to the study of birds. The country is not thickly populated and is mostly covered with pine forests. There are many creeks and swamps with luxuriant vegetation. Silver Hill is about 12 miles from the gulf of Mexico.

The birds I found in the radius of about three miles from my home are:

Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*). Only a pair migrating through.

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens virescens*). At a creek.

Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*). Abundant, especially when migrating.

Bob-white (*Colinus virginianus*). Common. In flocks till end of April.

Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*). Abundant. Did great damage in March destroying cucumber seeds and young plants. (Cucumbers are raised here on a large scale.)

Turkey Vulture (*Carthartes aura septentrionalis*).

Black Vulture (*Catharista nrbu*). Both common.

Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonicus*). Not abundant.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*).

Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius sparverius*).

Pileated Woodpecker (*Ceophloeus pileatus*). Rare.

Southern Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus auduboni*). Not abundant.

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). Most common of all woodpeckers.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*).

Southern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*).

Florida Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor chapmani*). Very abundant.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*). Rare.

Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*). The first was seen on March 27. Abundant.

Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*). The first came on April 16.

Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*). Only migrating through.

Florida Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata florincola*).

Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos brachyrhynchos*). Not abundant.

Southern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna argutula*).

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*). Not rare in orchards. Is building his nest in the middle of April.

Florida Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*). In swamps.

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina passerina*). Only migrating.

Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). Only when migrating.

Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis cardinalis*). Frequent, especially near swamps and creeks.

Purple Martin (*Progne subis subis*). Arrived in the first half of March.

Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*). Only migrating.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus ludovicianus*). Very abundant.

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo griseus griseus*).

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*). On bushes at a creek.

Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*). In winter.

Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos polyglottos*). Very abundant. The young ones leave the nest before middle May.

Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*). Rare.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*).

Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*). Breeds from the end of March.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*). At a creek in the shrubs.

Robin (*Planesticus migratorius*). Abundant in winter.

Bluebird (*Sialia sialis sialis*). They nest in the second half of February.

GEORGE BAUM.

FIRES IN TIMBER DESTROY MUCH VALUABLE WILD LIFE

The conservation of forested areas and particularly their protection from fire must go hand in hand with the conservation of most game, in the opinion of the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture. Shelter and food are necessities in the lives of the majority of animals and birds. Decrease one or both of these vital elements, which are supplied to a large degree in our forests, and the numbers of valuable wild creatures are correspondingly diminished.

Forest fires not only destroy the forest but eliminate the necessary food and shelter. The belief that burning over in certain localities is beneficial because it promotes a new growth of grass, ignores the fact that the grass thus obtained does not compensate for the destruction of trees and the shelter and food required by animals. Partridges in particular suffer from forest or brush fires. When their favorite places are burned over and their food and shelter are gone they are obliged to seek new localities and face new dangers.

Indiscriminate setting of spring fires in the southern states dislodges deer, opossums, raccoons, foxes, squirrels, rabbits, and other animals and endangers ground-nesting of birds in the timber, such as the woodcock, pheasants, wild turkey, and whip-poor-will. The woodcock is in some danger of extermination at the present time and deserves all possible protection. In seasons of drought, forest fires even invade marshy places and drive out fur-bearing animals as well as waterfowl and shorebirds. Many think that burning results merely in temporary inconvenience to the game, and may not realize that the food of many birds is largely the seeds and berries of the year before. Burning the brush also eliminates for months all shelter from natural enemies.

Burning of the ground cover in forests of longleaf and shortleaf pines kills the young trees as they emerge and results in thin, straggling growth. The burning of timber and other ground cover which should absorb and retain moistures also accelerates the run-off and af-